

## **Status of Fish Populations in Bark Camp Lake 2003 Edition**

Bark Camp Lake is a 61-acre lake located in Scott County. It is the oldest Department-owned lake in Southwest Virginia. When construction of the lake was completed in the mid 1950's, a beautiful lake completely surrounded by forested land was born. Some of the trees surrounding the lake have found their way into the lake and are providing good habitat for fish and good fishing spots for anglers. Clear water and fairly dense stands of aquatic vegetation offer anglers and other "fish watchers" a unique scenario.

A variety of fish species are available for anglers, including largemouth bass, black crappie, several sunfish species, channel catfish, and trout. Most of these fish populations are self-sustaining, meaning that they reproduce in the lake and maintain fishable populations without the need for stocking. Channel catfish fingerlings and trout are stocked to provide a bit of angling diversity. Grass carp are also stocked as needed to control aquatic vegetation.

Largemouth bass numbers are about average for small impoundments in Southwest Virginia. The size of bass available is well above average, however. About 15 percent of the adult largemouths exceed 15 inches in total length, and about 5 percent are longer than 20 inches. Each year biologists collect trophy-sized bass during routine sampling.

Anglers fishing for sunfish will find a great variety of options. Bluegills are the dominant sunfish species, but redear, pumpkinseed, redbreast sunfish and warmouths are also available in fishable numbers. Black crappie are present, but not very abundant.

Channel catfish and bullheads offer something for those anglers who target catfish. The lake is not known for exceptional catfishing, but some very large channel catfish have been collected in recent years. Some of these channel cats were over 30 inches long, so the lake definitely has the potential to produce some trophies.

Many anglers come to Bark Camp Lake to fish for stocked trout. Catchable-sized brown and rainbow trout are stocked periodically from October through May to ensure that there are enough trout in the lake to provide fishing opportunities.

A Virginia freshwater fishing license is required to fish the lake, and a trout-fishing license is required from October 1 through June 15. The lake is within the Clinch Ranger District of the George Washington-Thomas Jefferson National Forest, so a National Forest Stamp is required. The U. S. Forest Service also charges a parking (access) fee of \$3.00. A boat ramp, restrooms, universally accessible fishing piers and camping are available for use by anglers and others. Campers should contact the Clinch Ranger District at (276) 328-2931.

For more information on the fishery, contact Tom Hampton by telephone (276) 783-4860 or by e-mail [thampton@dgif.state.va.us](mailto:thampton@dgif.state.va.us).